

Soldier

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Summary: A small tribute to the clone that sacrificed himself to save his brothers, 99. His thoughts and feelings in regard to his brothers. Clone feels, one-shot.

Soldier

99 knew all his brothers, he had watched them grow and train as he cleaned up after them.

While other clones filled their heads with strategy and battle tactics. 99 filled his with letters and numbers of every brother, from the oldest to the newest ones being grown. Those numbers would be replaced one by one as his brother's found names to call themselves. Each different and unique as they were.

His favorite room at Kamino was the incubation chamber, to see his unborn brothers developing and growing before his very eyes. Even at these stages he could tell they had their own personalities.

That is why he had disagreed when Hevy said they were all just numbers, just numbers.

If only his many brothers could see what he saw when he paused in his work to look at the trees of clone children. Some brothers were calm and still in their tubes, while others were active, already itching to fight. Each one of them perfect in their own way. He had heard it said that the Jedi believed the Force influenced everything, that it had a purpose for everything.

99 liked to believe that there was a purpose for the way he had been born. That this Force had something planned for him. 99 saw how some of his brothers looked at him, with pity and disgust in their eyes. He knew that he was a mistake, a defect, a weak link in the code.

But in him beat the heart of a soldier, a soldier that he was born to be.

But his heart did not matter, he was looked down upon because his body was malformed, he couldn't run as fast, couldn't move half of his face. He was pushed to the side, forced to clean up after his brothers and the Kaminos. Believed that the only thing he would ever be able to do was sweep the floors.

Maybe that's why he felt closest to his brothers on the Domino Squad. They were the only group of his brothers that did not treat him as something beneath their notice. For so long they were considered rejects and failures, just as he was. 99 knew their pain and feelings of worthlessness.

He knew how hard each of them worked, saw that all they wanted was to graduate and go do their duty to the Republic.

He knew that Bric was too hard on them. They had so much potential, even 99 could see it. It would be a great loss to the Republic if they were sent down to janitor duty with him.

He was glad the night they had failed their finally test he had stuck around after hours, to catch Hevy before he went AWOL. He could see the burden his brother carried, but he could also see the potential as a leader also. Hevy was not just a name he had given his brother, but a remembrance. Hevy was the burden of life, but one must be strong enough to carry them.

Hevy was the first brother who looked at him as a brother, to call him brother. Who promised to keep in touch. A promise sealed with the gift of his medal. 99 had carried that medal with him everywhere, looking forward to the day he would be able to return it to its rightful owner.

Being on Kamino, 99 didn't fully understand the risk of Hevy not returning until Echo and Fives had returned and brought him the news of what happened to his brother. The medal that rested in his pocket was the only thing besides his memories that he had to remember his brave brother now.

Then the Separatists had invaded his home, and 99 had seen the true horrors of the war. 99 watched as his brothers were shot and killed in front of him as he ran around delivering ammo and grenades to his brothers to fight the clankers.

For a moment he was a soldier as he led his brothers, both old and new down the corridors towards the armory. He, 99, led no other than Commander Cody, and Captain Rex down the many corridors. The warm feeling of belonging and rightness as he helped prepare for battle was something he only dreamed of being apart of. A feeling that amplified as Cody and Rex gave him nods of respect.

It is why when they were running low on grenades, 99 had run back, determined to make sure his brothers would survive this fight.

"I'm a soldier like you" he had called back when Fives yelled at him not to go.

99 had just clutched the bag closer to him and continued to run.

"This is what I was bred for" he whispered to himself. He was a soldier, and he was built for this. He couldn't just stand to the side and allow his brothers to die without doing something.

His lack of battle skills is what got him in the end. He realized this as the blaster fire hit his back. He should have never run down the straight empty corridor with no protective cover. The blaster entered his back like fire, which was followed by the shot that knocked his leg out from underneath him.

99 felt his energy seep away, as his world went black.

99 knew that he had died, that he had died a soldier's death. So it was a surprise when he opened his eyes again.

"About time you woke up brother" came a voice beside him, a voice that he recognized. Turning towards the source, he was shocked and pleased to see Hevy standing there.

"Hevy?" he asked.

Hevy smiled and extended a hand, "Welcome home big brother."

99 reached up to take his hand, but stopped at the sight of his own. 99 looked down at shock at his arms, gone were the skinny muscles that he was used to. Reaching behind him, he sought the hump that had been constant in his life since the day he was born. He met with smooth skin, with strong muscles underneath.

"Welcome to Paradise Brother" said Hevy warmly, offering his hand again to 99. 99 gripped his brother's hand and pulled himself upright, standing tall for the first time in his life.

Following Hevy, 99 went into the bright light where he was greeted with Cut-Up, Droidbait, and every other brother that had fallen.

He was finally home.

* * *

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